(d) if so, whether Government would consider to close down NPPA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply above.

Decline in land fertility due to fertilizers

† 939. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that fertility of land throughout the country is continuously decreasing, due to use of chemicals fertilizers by farmers, for their crops;

(b) if so, whether Government would impart training to farmers for using useful chemical fertilizers, after undertaking and extensive test of agricultural land in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether it is also a fact that farmers in India get fertilizers on lowest subsidy in comparison to their counterparts in other countries of the world?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Application of fertilizers is recommended on the basis of existing nutrients of the soil and requirement of crops. However, there are certain instances of declining in soil health and productivity due to inadequate andfor imbalanced use of fertilizers in certain parts of the country. Government has taken the following steps to encourage the balanced use of fertilizers and sustenance of soil fertility:

(i) The soil-testing programme is periodically strengthened to make the fertilizer use recommendations according to the nutrient status of the soils.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(ii) Subsidy/concession is given to the controlled nitrogenous fertilizer (urea) as well as to the decontrolled phosphatic and potassic fertizers, so as to increase their balanced consumption.

(iii) Use of integrated nutrientsfaicro-nutrients through chemical fertilizers and organic sources like bio-fertilizers, composf vermi-compost is being encouraged so as to maintain soil , fertility and make cheaper source of plant nutrients available to the crops.

(d) There is no data available to confirm that the farmers in India get fertilizers on lowest subsidy in comparison to their counterparts in the other countries of the world.

Reduction in price control span of drugs

940. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently announced reduction in price control span on certain category of drugs;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) what is Government's mechanism to ensure that prices of essential drugs do not increase exorbitantly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Government have recently announced the "Pharmaceutical Policy-2002". The main objectives of this Policy . are, *inter-alia,* ensuring abundant availability at reasonable prices within the country of good quality essential pharmaceuticals of mass consumption and strengthening the indigenous capability for cost effective quality production. The policy provides for identifying the drugs for price regulation out of the basket of the items appearing in the National Essential Drug List and those considered important from the point of view of their use in various Health Programmes, in emergency care etc. There would be monitoring of price movement in other cases.